



El Camino Ramblings

**El Camino A's Chapter
MAFCA**

**P.O. Box 35
San Carlos, CA 94070**

Volume 49, Issue No. 9

August 2021

Upcoming Events

The Crafty A's will meet Tuesday, August 10 at 11:30 at Amici's in Menlo Park.

RSVP to Mary Anne 650 574-3169

The board will meet Monday, August 16, at 2:00 PM.

Bob Perkins and Maureen Morley will host.

The George Stergion Annual Picnic is scheduled for August 21 at Huddart Park.

A flyer for the picnic is in this newsletter.

The caterer needs a headcount, so RSVP is needed.

The person at the gate will have a list of folks who've RSVP'd and will waive the \$6 vehicle fee.

Name badges requested.

Sam Asaro will lead a group to the Picnic.

Meet at Wellesley Crescent at 9:30 AM on the 21st, depart at 10:00 AM.

Fourth Thursday dinner is on for August 26 at 6:00 PM at Amici's, Redwood Shores.

RSVP to Sam Asaro at 650 349-4357

MONTHLY EL CAMINO A's BUSINESS

BOARD MEETING: The Monday before the business meeting
BUSINESS MEETING: Third Thursday of the month at the Museum of San Carlos History, San Carlos, COVID-19 permitting.
Check the calendar later in this newsletter
NEWSLETTER: Mailed out one week before the business meeting.
EL CAMINO RAMBLINGS Is a monthly publication of the EI Camino A's Chapter, Model A Ford Club of America. It's sent electronically to all current, active members. On request, the newsletter will be sent via first class mail to current, active members. It will be sent electronically to any other Model A chapter on request.

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| August | | | |
|------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| <u>Birthdays</u> | | <u>Anniversaries</u> | |
| Gunnard Mahl | 2 | Bruce and Lisa Deal | 9 |
| Darryl Coe | 14 | John and Kelly Moody | 19 |
| Lowell Wolfe | 21 | David and Velvet Snow | 19 |
| Bill Mitchell | 22 | Tim and Judy Stevens | 20 |
| Ray Foppiano | 25 | Rick and Martha Kessler | 27 |
| Jane Reed | 31 | Mike and Janis Chapman | 30 |



June Chichizola fell at home, cracking her pelvis. At this writing she's recovering at Carlmont Gardens.

Marilyn Perry has been hospitalized recently and is now recuperating at home.

George Stergion Annual Picnic

celebrating the

El Camino A's 50th Anniversary

Saturday, August 21, 2021

10:30 AM – 2:00 PM



Miwok Shelter - Huddart Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside

[Click here for a map](#)

Bianchini's will cater.
Menu includes:



BBQ Quarter Chicken
Barbecue Beans
Corn on the Cob
Cookies and Brownies

Garlic Bread and Sourdough Rolls
Potato Salad
Pasta Primavera Salad
Iced Tea and Lemonade

Bianchini's needs a head count.

RSVP to Bob Perkins or Maureen Morley by August 10.



Either
or
or

Call
Email
Write

650 367-7410
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11 Ethel Court
Redwood City, CA 94061



Huddart Park doesn't allow pets, or smoking.

Betsy and Me – Rick Black

I got the car bug when I was a teenager. I learned to drive in my Dad's 1952 Chevy sedan in the parking lot of the local market when I was 15. I couldn't wait to get my driver's license when I turned 16. Since my dad had his own gas station, I hung around on the weekends with him and did odd jobs, usually pumping gas and cleaning windows (remember those days?) I remember that in 1960 he warned me never to put water into the radiator of a Corvair - because there wasn't any radiator, being air cooled.



1952 Chevy (Two Tone Grey)

Rick Black

When I got out of High School, I bought a 1936 Ford Sedan with my brother and a friend. We dug up \$17 each to buy it. We didn't have insurance, so we just began to "fix her up". You can imagine three teenagers with hardly a clue trying to "restore" an old car - it wasn't pretty. We finally had to sell it due to lack of insurance. At the time, my transportation was a hand-me-down 1948 Chevy Sedan that my Mom had been using before Dad bought her a 1961 Impala. The Chevy was okay, but it had 4 doors, which was NOT okay for a teen to be seen driving.



1948 Chevy Four Door

Rick Black



The TV series "77 Sunset Strip" was on TV back then, and I loved the Kookie Car, a 1923 Model T Bucket Roadster. I decided that's what I wanted. But I couldn't afford one of those, so instead I looked through the papers for any "old car."



I found one that was in my price range: a 1940 Mercury Sedan for \$50. I drove to Van Nuys California to see it. When I knocked on the door of the house in the ad, to my surprise Actor Jack Elam greeted me! I was in awe - I was a big fan of western movies and I recognized him immediately due to his wandering left eye. He said the car belonged to his son who had just gone into the Navy. I handed him \$50 and took ownership. My dream was to remove the Merc body and turn this into a T-bucket Roadster!



However, I hadn't asked my dad if I could buy a car, so I mentioned it to him. "No" was the answer, as I already had a car. So I brought the Merc to a friend's house and stored it there. A week later, I asked my dad if I could get a car to work on. He said "yes", as long as it wasn't drivable. Back at my friend's house, we unbolted the body, took out the seat cushions and set them beside the car and rolled the body off onto the cushions. A local wrecking company came and took all the sheet metal away for salvage. We now had a rolling chassis ready for a new body.

I then told dad that I found a chassis to work on and he said I could bring it home. I think we pushed it the 1.5 miles back to my house. I spent some time in the next few months with putty knives removing dirt from the chassis. In my search for a Model T bucket body, I found nothing I could afford. So I visited Ben's Model A wrecking yard in Burbank California to search for a Model A body. The yard was full of Model As, but only 4-door sedans and coupes. Not a roadster in sight. But there was one Tudor sedan body, and that was different enough for me to buy it. Price for anything in the yard was \$25 - body, axles, transmissions. So I handed over \$25 and a 1929 Tudor body was delivered to my house.



A few days later, I rounded up some buddies to help lift the Tudor body onto the 1940 Mercury chassis. As you might expect, the Tudor was much smaller than the Merc chassis, and the body sat inside the frame and rested on the torque tube. Very disappointing. Rethinking the project, I decided I just needed a Model A frame, and as chances would have it, a local car club was dismantling their 1930 Model A coupe, and I talked them into swapping frames with me, keeping the Merc engine and transmission. The coupe also had a flathead engine, so my Merc would slip right in.



1929 Tudor Street Rod

Rick Black

Several weeks later, with the new frame and Model A front and rear ends, the Merc engine was installed into the frame and the body hoisted into position. Now, I had a good looking hot rod!

However, over the course of time, not realizing that 1928-29 and 1930-31 Model A parts were a bit different, I found that body parts were just not lining up. I did get the fenderless Tudor running, and it ran well, but I finally decided to get rid of it since I just didn't have enough money (and time) to restore it the way I wanted.

Then, in 1964, I enlisted in the Army and was shipped to France. Being away from American old cars, I dreamed of another Model A, but I decided that the next one would be left totally original so that the parts would fit properly. I had Model A books from JC Whitney shipped to me, and I read them cover to cover many times. My dream car was (and still is) the 1930-31 Deluxe Phaeton - I love the way it looks with the top up!

I got out of the Army in 1967 and moved back to California to continue my college education. I longed for another Model A. In May 1968, as I was driving my motorcycle in a rural part of the San Fernando Valley, I spotted a car behind a fence and under a tree. I could tell it was a Model A, some kind of sedan with the spare on the back. An old man just happened to be walking through the yard and I hollered out to him, asking if the "old car" was for sale. It was.



Betsy - 1968

Rick Black

A closer look told me it was a 1931 Tudor Sedan, on blocks, nearly complete but devastated by being stored outside. The license plates on the car were from 1951, so the car had been sitting there for 17 years. Not much upholstery was left, but the seats were there. The top had torn off long ago and the wood bows sagged sadly. Several inches of mulch from the tree sat on the plywood floorboards.

The body didn't have a dent on it anywhere. The fenders were rough but very usable. Other than the lack of wheels, the only other parts missing were the gas and radiator caps and the oil cap. I was in love! Then the question I hesitated to ask: "How much

do you want for it?" The old man told me that he'd been refusing to sell the car for years, but his doctor had just told him if he wanted to keep living, he'd have to move out of the Los Angeles area - he was buying a place in Turlock. So, he said he wouldn't take anything less than \$100 for the car.

I hopped back on my motorcycle and raced home, got the checkbook, and gave him payment. He gave me a bill of sale and the car was mine! A couple of weeks later, I had borrowed some 18" wheels and tires and my buddy and I towed the car home behind his red 1957 Chevy.

Over the next two years, I took it apart, cleaned it up, and put it back together again. I got it running and drove it around as-is. It was very reliable. During this time, got married, had a baby girl, and joined the San Fernando Valley Chapter of MAFCA. We went to most of their events.

In the summer of 1970, I graduated from college, got hired by Bank of America as a Systems Analyst, and prepared to move to San Francisco. We loaded our household things into a U-Haul, then I drove the Model A solo up Highway 101 the 400 miles to San Francisco. Only problem was a stuck cut out, but a few taps with my shoe got the points unstuck.

In 1971, we were able to buy a little 2-bedroom house in San Bruno. As we settled in, I longed for another Model A chapter. There was one in San Francisco and one in Santa Clara, but both were quite a distance away. There were 105 names in the MAFCA membership roster between those two cities. I sent out letters and got a dozen replies, and we arranged for a first meeting in my home. Eight people showed up, we signed a new chapter petition. El Camino A's was born.



1931 Mail Truck

Rick Black

I divorced in 1974 and the car project didn't move very quickly. I had the all the sheet metal chemically stripped, primed and painted, and stored it in my garage. I acquired a pickup cab and bed and put it on my Tudor chassis and drove it around while I worked on the sheet metal. It was pretty ugly. Then in 1976 I got distracted by a 1931 Mail Truck that I just had to have. Flew to Everett Washington and hauled it home. It sat in my already crowded garage for several years.

Finally in 1978, with the help of the El Camino A's, a new 2-car garage replaced the 1928 single car garage in my back yard. SPACE. It was great.

The Tudor restoration crawled along. The body was put back on the chassis and taken to Acme Body Shop in San Bruno. Owner Ralph Cook hammered the fenders into amazingly good shape and even cut a welled fender hole in the left fender.

In 1979, I finally had saved enough money for the upholstery kit from LeBaron Bonney. I think I paid \$800 for the mohair interior, new seat frames, and carpets. They sat in boxes for 13 years in my spare bedroom. The same year I got my engine rebuilt by Cal's Machine Shop in Escalon. They did a great job, even shaving off the original engine number and stamping the number that was on my car's frame.

Then in 1980, I met Dana. We dated for two years while the Model A project sat untouched. In 1982, we were married, and my attention was away from the A. We remodeled our house over the next two years, then decided to move to Southern Oregon. We left all our El Camino A's friends behind and moved to the next adventure.

Oregon was really nice, and we both found work quickly, but our focus was on setting up a horse farm, so the Model A sat patiently in storage. In 1986, our company got sold and we both were laid off. I found another job at 1/2 the salary and we were really strapped for money the next few years.

In 1989 we decided to sell the farm and move to a smaller place. The Model A followed us there. Our economic condition improved, and I found a painter who could give the Tudor a regal paint job, which was completed in 1991. The project was finally moving again. The following year, I got a call from my daughter, who by this time was 23 years old. "Dad, I'm getting married next year - can we use the Model A in the Wedding?" Sure, I said, no problem. I have a year to get it finished.

It was a race to the finish line. In the spring of 1993, I had installed the new engine (which had sat unused for 24 years) and got the car running. Powder painted the wheels, put on new tires, and drove the chassis around the neighborhood with only a cowl and VW seat to make sure all was well. The transmission had a bad whine in 2nd gear. A quick call to Neil Chichizola and he was able to get me replacement gears. After the reassembly and another spin around the block, she ran like a clock!

I took the cowl off and mounted all the painted fenders and running boards. Then a group of friends visited and we got the Tudor body on the chassis. I put on the hood and aligned all the body panels. It was May now and we had until August 1 to finish. In the next two months we got the top installed and then one hot day in late July, installed the LeBaron Bonney interior, fresh from a 24-year snooze in storage. Fit like a glove.



Wedding - San Mateo

Rick Black

With fewer than 100 miles on the engine, I didn't feel comfortable making the 350 drive to San Mateo, so Betsy got trailered behind our pickup. The trip was uneventful. My daughter and future son-in-law had never seen the Tudor restored, and we drove it to Carl Pileri's home until the wedding day. Carl volunteered to be the Chauffeur since I was busy being the bride's father during the ceremony. While the wedding was in progress, Carl drove up to the Church and parked right in front. No one in the wedding party had seen the car since we left California in 1984, and it made quite a hit. The bride and groom got into the car, obliged the photographers, and were whisked off to the reception with ahoogas and horns blasting.

Since 1993, we've driven our Deluxe Tudor 11,000 miles, mostly around town. The longest trip was from Oregon to Reno in 1998 for the National Convention, where Betsy won a third place in the Blue Ribbon judging. She's given us many miles of smiles, both from us and from passers-by.



Rick (aka Santa)

Rick Black